Staff Memorandum

To	Infrastructure and Community Investment Committee
Subject	2025 Drinking Water Survey
Date	March 4, 2026
Ward	All
From	D. Moreau, Manager of Water Operations
Executive Member Approval	S. Diemert, General Manager of Infrastructure and Growth Management (Acting)
CAO Approval	M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide Members of the Infrastructure and Community Investment Committee with a summary of the City of Barrie's ('City') 2025 Drinking Water Survey results. It includes a comparison with the 2023 survey and outlines actions taken by the Water Operations Branch in response to previous feedback.

Background

The City's Water Operations Branch (WOB) is responsible for providing safe, reliable, and high-quality drinking water to residents and businesses.

In 2023, the City completed a City-wide drinking water survey to better understand customers' experiences and concerns. The survey asked questions about water use, water quality, safety, knowledge of water testing, and interactions with WOB staff. The previous survey received 1,226 responses, showing strong public participation.

Results from the previous survey showed high satisfaction with water pressure, and identified concerns about taste, odour, and limited public awareness of water testing practices. In response, the WOB increased maintenance in certain areas, installed auto-flushers, and expanded public outreach education efforts.

In 2025, a follow-up survey was completed to measure progress, review changes in public perception, and continue community engagement on drinking water issues. This time, we received 815 responses and provided useful information for comparison and ongoing improvement.

Key Survey Findings

When compared to the 2023 results, the 2025 survey found that:

- Water-use habits have remained largely the same.

- Overall confidence in tap water safety and satisfaction levels have decreased slightly.
- Residents in northern wards that receive groundwater reported lower confidence than residents in southern wards.
- Awareness of municipal water testing has not changed significantly, with about one-third of respondents still unaware of how water is tested.

Next Steps

1. Ongoing Monitoring and Maintenance

The WOB will continue its regular maintenance programs, including annual flushing and swabbing, as well as scheduled maintenance of reservoirs and water towers. These activities improve water turnover and reduce mineral build-up within the distribution system.

2. Improved Communication and Public Education

The WOB will continue working with the City's Communications Team to improve how drinking water information is shared with residents.

A long-term Communications Plan will be developed to provide clear and consistent messaging about:

- How drinking water is treated and tested
- Why activities such as flushing and swabbing occur
- How residents can report concerns or request information

Information will be shared through multiple channels, including:

- Water treatment plant tours
- Drinking Water Week activities
- The City's website
- Signs and educational materials

Existing education and outreach opportunities such as water treatment plant tours and Experience Water Days for Grade 7 and 8 students have continued. However, engagement has expanded to attending high schools and college fairs to share and educate on the water industry and more specifically, Barrie's drinking water system.

3. Continuous Improvement

The WOB will continue to:

- Focus maintenance and infrastructure improvements in areas with ongoing water quality concerns
- Improve public awareness and understanding of water testing practices
- Monitor customer satisfaction and public perception through future surveys and community engagement

Conclusion

The 2025 survey shows that residents' water-use habits remain steady, and it highlights an opportunity to further strengthen confidence in the quality of tap water. The findings underscore the value of ongoing maintenance practices and clear communication about how drinking water is treated and monitored. These insights will continue to inform operational priorities, infrastructure planning, and public education efforts to enhance trust in the City's drinking water system.

Appendix:

Not Applicable

Memo Author:

Diane Moreau, Manager of Water Operations, Infrastructure Department

File #:

C11A

Pending #:

Not Applicable